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The Geographical Foundation of Turkey's World Relation.—

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The region to which I am here inviting attention has occupied a conspicuous position on the stage of world events since the earliest known times. Faint rays of prehistoric light reveal it as the bridge over which the race of round-headed men crossed into Europe from Asia. During antiquity we find it to be the original seat of civilizations which radiate outward in every direction. In medieval times it is the great half-way station of the main artery of world trade. We know of it in modern days as the center of a mighty international struggle familiarly known as the Eastern Question for the past hundred years.

A world relation of such an enduring character must obviously rest on exceedingly firm foundations. A search for its causes leads us straight into the field of geography, where we find the three elements of position, form, and natural resources to be primarily responsible for the extraordinary interest which has always been coupled to the various names by which the region has been known. An investigation of these three phases of the country's geography is therefore in order. Before proceeding further I shall define this region as the Asiatic extension of Mediterranean lands nestling against the great central mountain mass of Asia. It is sharply separated from the rest of the continent by a mountain wall which extends continuously from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf and is made up of the Armenian and Zagros ranges. It is a peninsula itself formed by two distinct peninsulas. The region is one of the unit divisions of the Asiatic continent in the sense that it is the only part of the entire Asiatic continent subject to Mediterranean climatic influences. It is interesting, in this connection, because it is also endowed with political unity, as all of the Ottoman state falls at present inside these limits.

By position, first at the junction of three continents and, therefore, on the main field of history, secondly as the site of convergence of the great avenues of continental travel, and thirdly by its situation in one of the two regions in which climatic conditions proved most favorable for the early develop-

ment of humanity, Turkey at first scrutiny appears to have been eminently favored by nature. These advantages converted it into the meeting-place of societies which are generally associated with the three continents which the country unites. Aryan, Tatar, and Semitic peoples are well represented in the land.

In considering Turkey as the meeting-place of continental cultures it is necessary that we should confine our conception of the fact to the strictly literal sense of the term. The country is a meeting-place and nothing more. It has never been a transition zone physically and as a consequence there has been very little mingling of the different elements in its population. The very structure of the land deters fusion of the inhabitants into a single people. The interior upland rises abruptly above a narrow fringe of coastal lowland. Its surface features, consisting partly of deserts and of saline lakes, recall the typical aspect of Central Asia. On the other hand, the luxuriant vegetation of the maritime fringe reflects European characteristics. No better relic of Asia Minor's former land connection with Europe exists than this strip of the west soldered on the eastern continent. But the physical union is clean-cut and as a result the change from the low-lying garniture of green scenery to the bare tracts of the uplands is sharp. These features make of Turkey a land of strange contrasts. Its coasts are admirably washed by the waters of half a dozen seas and yet, in places, a journey of a bare twenty-five miles from the shore lands the traveler squarely in the midst of a continental district.

So diversified a country could not be the land of patriotism. And as we pick up the thread of its troubled history we find a woful absence of this spirit among its citizens. In Byzantine times as in Ottoman, a selfish bias towards local interests, a parochial attachment of the sordid type, pervades its population. A medley of peoples, each filling its particular geographical frame and animated by widely divergent ideals is constantly engaged in looking abroad rather than in the land for the attainment of their hopes. Nature fostered this condition. Communications between the different regions have always been arduous. From the narrow fringe of coastland to the interior plateau the ascent is steep. More than that, the maritime dweller of the lowland shunned the total lack of comfort which he knew awaited him on the arid highland of the core. Conversely the

indolent inhabitant of this elevated district realized that were he to settle near the marshes he could not compete successfully with the more active seafarers. As time went on the coastal peoples—mainly Greeks—accustomed themselves to look beyond the sea for intercourse with the outside world while the Turkish tenants of the interior land still kept in their mind's eye the vast Asiatic background out of which they had emerged.

In the same way the imposing barrier of the Taurus prevented contact between the occupants of the districts lying north and south of the mountain. The significance of this range to Europeans cannot be overestimated. The mountain has proved to be the chief obstacle to the northward spread of Semitic peoples and their civilizations. Successive waves of southern invaders, invariably of Semitic descent, whether highly civilized or drawn from tribes of savages, spent their fury in vain lashings against the rocky slopes. The past is verified historically whether we consider the failure of Assyrians in antiquity, of the Saracens during Middle Ages, or of the Egyptians and Arabs led by Mahomet Ali in modern days. The linguistic boundary between Turkish and Arabic occurs in this mountain chain at present and Hogarth has expressed the fact in a realistic phrase by stating that at an elevation of about 2,000 feet Arabic speech is chilled to silence.

To come back once more to position, we find that while this feature has generated an attracting force the shape of the land, on the other hand, promoted a constantly repellent action. We have in this situation a remarkable conflict which has exerted itself to the detriment of the inhabitants. The centripetal action of position was always reduced to a minimum by the centrifugal effects of form. The mountainous core formed by the Anatolian tableland and the western highland of Armenia could only be a center of dispersal of waters, and hence to a large degree of peoples. Accordingly throughout history we have a continuous spectacle of peoples swarming into the region only to be scattered immediately into new directions. Furthermore, however much the land partook of the character of a single unit with reference to the broad divisions of Asia, the fact remains that it was greatly subdivided within itself. The six main compartments into which it may be laid off have fostered totally divergent civilizations. I have dwelt on this in the last November Bulletin of the American Geographical Society.

All of these conditions were fundamentally fatal to the formation of nationality. They favored only intercontinental travel and trade.

In only one respect did position and structure operate harmoniously. Both agencies combined to create Turkey's relations with the world beyond its borders. This was facilitated by the admirable set of natural routes which led in and out of the country. Beginning with the broad band of the Mediterranean sea, land and water routes succeed each other in close sequence. The inland sea itself is prolonged through the *Ægean* and the Turkish straits into the Black Sea, the shores of which are dotted in swift succession by the terminals of great avenues from northeastern Europe, as well as all of northern and central Asia. On the European mainland the far-reaching Danube had an outlet into Turkey through the Morava-Maritza valleys in addition to its own natural termination. The Dnieper valley played an exceedingly important share in connecting Turkey with northern lands. To the east the trough-like recesses in the folds of the mountains of Armenia and Kurdistan led to the great Tabriz gate beyond which the way as far as China lay open. A somewhat more winding course through these same mountains extended into the Mesopotamian valley, beyond which the Persian Gulf opened sea travel to centers of civilization of the monsoon lands or westward to the African coast. Land connection with the continent also existed by means of the rift valley of Syria where the beginning of the African rift system is found. Through the occurrence of all these channels of penetration the history of Turkey finds place as a special chapter in the history of the world's great nations. A greater share of responsibility falls on Turkey for this relation than on the Turks themselves.

The appearance and establishment of this people in a land which was not that of their origin follows their life as nomad tribesmen of the vast steppeland of Central Asia. They were men at large upon the world's largest continent, the northerners of the east, who naturally and unconsciously went forth in quest of the greater comforts afforded by southern regions. The vast flatland which gave birth to their race lies open to the frozen gales of the north. Its continental climate in turn icy cold or of burning heat was cut off from the tempering influences prevailing behind the folds of Tertiary mountain piles to the

south. And as the steppe-men migrated southward their gradually swelling numbers imparted density to the human mass they formed because expansion on the east or west was denied them. China and Chinese, admirably sheltered by barriers of deserts and mountains, stopped their easterly spread. So did Christianity in Russia, on the west, though at a heavy cost to the country for no obstacle had been raised by nature to meet their advance. The open plain of Central Asia merges insensibly into that of north Europe. That is why incidentally Russia is half Tatar to-day. The Asiatic was forced upon her. She sacrificed herself by absorbing him into her bosom, saving north-central Europe thereby from eastern invasions but forfeiting the advantages of progress.

Cut off from East and West in this manner the only alternative left to the Turk was to scale the plateau region of western Asia and to swarm into the avenues that led him to conquered territory where he succeeded in attaining power and organizing his undisciplined hosts into the semblance of a state. The presence of the Turk upon the land on which he conferred his Mongolian name and the very foundation of the Turkish state can in this manner be attributed to outward causes rather than to local development. It was essentially a process of transplantation. The consolidation and rise to power of the Ottoman Empire between the close of the 13th century and the 16th were in themselves largely due to foreign conditions, for during that interval Europe was busily engaged in extirpating feudalism and objectionable phases of medieval clerical influences from its soil.

The world relation of Turkish lands antedates, however, the coming of the Turks by many a century. Problems summarized in the familiar appellation of the 'Eastern Question' have their origin in the existence of the narrow waterways consisting of the Dardanelles, Marmora, and Bosphorus. This watery gap has exerted profound influence in shaping the relation of Turkish territory to the outside world. The Eastern Question is as old as the history of civilization on this particular spot of the inhabited world. It could not be otherwise because fundamentally this momentous international problem is merely that of determining which people or nation shall control the strait. Who shall gather toll from the enormous transit trade of the region? This is the economic problem which has always

passionately agitated the leading commercial nations of the world. Its continuity is a proof of its geographical character. As long as these straits will exist at the point of nearest convergence of the Balkan and Anatolian peninsulas, identical problems are bound to recur on their site. Beneath the shifting scenes of human events the abiding stage persists in directing them into its own channels.

Accordingly as early as in late Minoan times and surely in full Mycenaean period, some fifteen hundred or two thousand years before our era, we find the Eastern Question already vexing the world. It centers first around Troy, because the city commanded the southwestern outlet of the straits and played the same leading part in the history of its day as Constantinople has done since then. The shifting of the site to the northeastern end of the waterway represents the gradual spread of Hellenic influence in northeastern maritime territory.

We can only come to an adequate conception of the rôle of Troy in history by a clear understanding of the value of its site. The city was a toll-station. Its citizens accumulated wealth in the manner in which the burghers of Byzantium laid the foundations of their vast fortunes. Schliemann's excavations, although conducted with an unfortunate disregard of modern archeological methods, nevertheless are conclusive on the revelation of the existence of immense treasures represented by precious metals and jewelry. These riches may well be regarded as value paid for the right of the free passage of vessels and their freight in the straits. Nor is it strange to find that coeval with the decline of the Homeric city, the earliest mentions of Byzantium, its successor, appear. Consistently with this method of enlightening Trojan history it becomes possible to reach a rational understanding of Homer's classic epic, as Leaf has done in England, and regard it as the account of a secular struggle for the possession of an eminently profitable site. The testimony of history on the number of sieges which Constantinople has undergone is at least precise, although no literary masterpiece sheds lustre on the events. It is impossible to escape from the parallelism in the histories of Byzantium and Troy simply because the geographical background of both sites is similar in every respect. In the case of Troy, it meant convenient access to the Pontine rearland, probably the first *El Dorado* recorded by history—the land of

fabulous treasures in search of which the Argonautic expeditions were equipped. With Byzantium it meant drawing on the luxuries which Asia could supply from as far as the Pacific.

So much for the antiquity of the Eastern Question. I am now going to pass to another phase of Turkey's world relation, namely, that of the land's influence on the discovery of America. We now stand on the threshold of modern history in order to deal with a broad economic problem which affected late Medieval commerce and which was an ever recurrent theme in that splendid period of active human enterprise known as the Age of Discovery. The dominant idea of the day was to find means of facilitating east-west trade in the eastern hemisphere. I propose to review some of the facts bearing on this subject.

From the earliest times the commercial relations between the land of Cathay and Europe had been one-sided. The east sold and the west purchased. There was very little exchange. The products which came from the east could all be classed as luxuries. They constituted freight of small volume, but the value of which ran high. Precious stones, fine woods, essences, and spices composed the freight. These commodities had been shipped to Europe for about two millennia prior to the fourteenth century of our era. Overland, the caravans ploughed their way across the southern expanse of Russia's interminable steppe-land and penetrated finally into the plateaus of Iran and Anatolia. Their home-stretch lay in Turkey. By sea the traders were accustomed to end their journeys at the head of the Persian Gulf, whence the valuable wares would be shipped farther west via Mesopotamia. In this case again the home-stretch is found on Turkish soil. It was not until about the end of the 4th century B. C., when the Egyptian hamlet of Rhacotis changed its name into that of Alexandria, that this sea route was extended into the Red Sea and Mediterranean. At this time the vision of acquiring wealth through the eastern trade began to dawn on the minds of the inhabitants of the Mediterranean seaboard. Many centuries were to elapse, however, before westerners realized that fortunes could be made by venturing into eastern fields. The profits and the splendor of the eastern trade were popularized by Christendom when the accounts of Marco Polo and the friar travelers of his time became available.

Then the ambition of every adventurous merchant was to act as middleman in the trade of Cathay.

The bulk of the east-west trade in Medieval time flowed through the same two main arteries. The northern land route from China through Central Asia passed through the Tabriz and Erzerum gates and ended at Trebizond, the balance of the journey being made by sea through the Bosphorus-Dardanelles way. The southerly course was an all-water route from the sea of China to the Mediterranean.

The incentive to reduce cost of transportation was as strong in those days as it is at present. The northern route being mainly over land was a source of incessant worry to the trader. The unrest which followed the appearance of Mohammedanism, the reluctance of the adherents of Islam to deal with infidels rendered commerce more and more risky. Transportation by land was slower and less profitable than by sea, as it is now. Caravans could not avoid brigandage as easily as ships could run the gauntlet of piratical depredation. It was not only a case of argosies reaching port but also of camels escaping highwaymen. In addition, duties had to be paid at four or five different points of transshipment. If we examine the pepper and ginger trade alone—the supply of both of which came from the east—we find that from Calicut, the great emporium of trade on the Malabar coast, these spices were carried by the Arabs to Jiddah and thence to Tor in the Sinaitic peninsula. Overland journeys began at the last point and extended to Cairo. From this city a river journey on the Nile to Rosetta followed, after which the freight was packed on camels and sent to Alexandria. All these conditions made for the increase of cost of the eastern wares which were supplied to Europe.

With the cost of eastern commodities rising higher and higher as land transportation became more and more hazardous the minds of navigators naturally turned to the possibility of discovering a seaway to India and Cathay. The incident of the discovery of America in the course of this attempt to lower prevailing freight rates was an inevitable consequence of economic conditions. The chief point of interest to us resides in the fact that the discovery which immortalized Columbus' name was accelerated through the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Turks in 1453.

The capture of the Byzantine capital came as the deathblow to an already declining commercial intercourse. Henceforth the Moslem was to stand guard at the western gate through which east-to-west intercontinental trade had passed. And there seemed to be no doubt that he was firmly resolved to prevent the Christian from traveling back and forth through his dominions. It meant the definite closing of the western gate to eastern commerce. The first evil effects of the Turkish conquest were felt by the Venetians and Genoese. The Venetians especially incurred the wrath of Mohammed the Conqueror on account of the aid they had rendered to the beleaguered capital. Greater leniency was shown by the Turks to the Genoese who had refrained from overt acts of sympathy toward the Byzantines.

The Sultans themselves as well as their ministers were willing to maintain the trade which traversed their lands. It left a share of its proceeds in the Turkish treasury. As a matter of fact the only commerce between Turkish lands under Mohammedan rule and the west has existed because of the income it brought to the Turkish government. But the barrier of religious divergences proved insurmountable to commerce. The great significance of the Turkish conquest of the Byzantine Empire must be sought in its practically cutting off land communications between Western Europe and Eastern Asia. The impetus to westerly exploration was intensified. Before the fall of Constantinople the discovery of the western sea route to the east was regarded as highly desirable. It now became a necessity.

The possibility of reaching the Far East by a voyage through the pillars of Hercules had not been foreign to the active intellect of the Greeks and Romans, yet the incentive to undertake exploration did not acquire intensity until the latter half of the 15th century. The Turkish advance to western Asia came, therefore, as a shock, the impact of which forced trade out of the Mediterranean through the straits of Gibraltar into the wide Atlantic.

Another important result of the Turk's conquests in the Balkan and Anatolian peninsulas was the diversion of the Eastern trade from European land routes into sea lanes. The change in the direction of intercontinental traffic impoverished the German-speaking inhabitants depending on the Danube artery of con-

tinental life to such an extent that their economic prosperity was lost. This state of things occurred at a time when the natural wealth of this central region was steadily drained by the all-powerful Vatican. The Reformation, which was as much a political move as it was religious, was therefore welcomed by the rulers of little states who grasped the opportunity of despoiling the Roman church of its landed property. The loss caused by the Turkish curtailment of trade was temporarily offset in this manner.

One of the effects of the extension of the Asiatic steppe to within sight of Mediterranean waters has been to carry the art of China from its Far Eastern seclusion to the very door of Europe. But as distance imparts faintness to the westerly migration of Chinese taste it is only in a stage of waning influence that we find it in Turkey. It is a result of the trickling of the Turkish element through the passes that connect the plateaus of Iran and Anatolia, for Persia has always been swayed by China in matters of elegance and art. At various stages of Persian history have entire colonies of Chinese artists been induced by the Shahs to take up residence in Persia. Many of the patterns on Oriental rugs bear traces of this Chinese influence and this influence in a way extends much farther west, for both in Europe and the New World the standards of taste in rugs and carpets have been raised conspicuously by the endeavor to reproduce the beauty of Oriental coloring and designing.

Turkish art is modelled on Chinese in the sense that its products had to conform to conventional patterns instead of imitating nature. It destroyed initiative and prevented the artist's imagination from soaring beyond defined limits, but powerfully realistic effects were nevertheless obtained. One has only to take up an illuminated manuscript to ascertain this. Persian manuscripts show Chinese characteristics to a large extent chiefly because the Persian school of art covered a wide range. It is the only one in Mohammedan countries to allow the representation of the human figure. But contiguity with Turkey had to make itself felt, so that occasionally, though very seldom, Turkish manuscripts with illuminations in which personages in various attitudes are portrayed can be met. The distinctly Mongoloid features of the faces delineated in these instances bespeak the origin of the art. The slit eye is gen-

erally present. It is mainly, however, in the ornamental borders devoid of human representation that Chinese features are found mingled with Arabic. The conventionalized representation of the cypress tree so common in Turkish decoration is an instance of the Far Eastern influence. Again in mosque interiors richly ornamented by displays of superb tiling the hand of Persian artists trained in Chinese methods can be discerned.

The introduction of Chinese decoration in Turkey is an innovation which follows Arabian influences by four or five centuries. It serves as a reminder of the Mongolian element in the Turk. Through contact with the Chinese the Mongols had attained a higher intellectual level than the Turks. Hulaku, the grandson of Jenghiz Khan, had included Chinese artists among the retainers he had brought into Western Asia. The tales of his period reveal Far Eastern fashions, and this is likewise true of the ogives found in the buildings of this time. But apart from these effects of the Turkish conquest China was known to the inhabitants of Anatolia through the overland silk trade, as is attested by Armenian records of the middle fifth century.¹

In literature also Turkey has taken lessons from the east and through the avenues created by the East-West troughs of the Armenian highland which debouch on the Persian plateau. A Turkish poet is not entitled to the qualification without having given proof of a required amount of deftness on the Persian lyre. Turkish poetry is in fact perhaps more indebted to Persian than to Arabic, the latter language being the mainstay of prose composition.

As to the present world relations of Turkey, I have outlined them in the April, 1916, issue of the *Geographical Review*. I shall summarize them briefly by stating that by its position the country lies squarely in the path of both Teutonic and Slavic advance. A natural course of expansion is leading Germany to the southeast across the Balkan peninsula into Turkey. The extension of frontiers required by Russia likewise determines Slavic conquest of Turkey. Overpopulation in the one case and the need of access to ice-free waters in the other make the contest inevitable. In both the problem is mainly economic.

¹ Yule, H.: *Cathay and the way thither*, Hakluyt Soc., London, 1915, pp. 93-94.

At bottom it is the modern phase of the Homeric struggle idealized in the Iliad. To-day the Teuton is merely heeding the call of the land, whereas the Slav is responding to the call of climate. These are geographical factors which underlie the contest.

Turkey, lying at Europe's very door, is a virgin field of exploitation. The undeveloped resources of this country are varied as they are immense. If properly exploited they will undoubtedly afford a splendid opportunity for the investment of capital. They have been neglected for more than 2,000 years. At the very dawn of the Christian era we find Strabo bewailing Roman indifference to Anatolian colonization and urging his countrymen to go forth and embark in commercial ventures in Asia Minor. The noted geographer dwells with particular insistence on the variety of the land's resources but we know that his foresight and exhortations were unheeded. The Byzantines barely scratched the land to supply their needs and the Turks who succeeded them did not even attempt as much. Turkey therefore awaits its conversion into European colonies in order to become productive. This condition adds its own attractiveness to the advantages of its position.

Although practically unexploited, the products of the country enjoy fame all over the world for their excellence. I shall only mention a few to recall the familiarity of the subject. Long before Australian mohair was known mohair came from the plateau regions between Angora and Konia. The raw silk of the Lebanon and of the Brussa district, famous for its mulberry trees, commands high prices in Europe to-day. And this is true of the past thousand years. The rugs which adorn western homes in Europe and America come principally from Asia Minor. The Persian Gulf yields an annual harvest of pearls. The tobacco of Anatolia, especially from the valleys debouching into the Black Sea, ranks among the choicest in the world. The dried figs of Smyrna, the oranges of Jaffa, and the olives of Palestine yield in excellence to none of their kind grown elsewhere. Arabia is a household name for good coffee and savory dates.

By means of irrigation Asia Minor and Mesopotamia can be converted into thriving agricultural districts. Experiments in cereal and cotton cultivation have already yielded excellent results, both on the Anatolian tableland and in the Cilician plains. The chief source of wealth of Turkey lies, however, in its

undeveloped mineral deposits. Practically every variety of ores is known to occur. The area of transition between the plateau of Iran and the Mesopotamian depression is characterized by the existence of oil fields. The fuel is known along the entire western border of the Turkish natural region. The mountainous core of the country is a natural store of metal. It is an area of land constriction due to the pressure exerted by the weight of part of the Siberian steppeland pressing against the Arabian tableland. In the folding brought about by the application of these forces, numerous channels tapping deep into the earth's interior were created. These openings became the areas of circulation for heavily mineralized waters. The rich contents of the core were brought up and deposited at the surface not only within the area of folding but beyond, as far as the effects of the disturbance were felt. To judge from the distribution of minerals, all of Turkey has been affected by these crustal movements. The deposits that have been found are generally known to be of considerable size. Their contents would probably have been exhausted had not capital abstained from taking risks in the presence of Turkish lawlessness and misrule. The partition of Turkey into European colonies will create a swift change in this attitude on the part of European investors.

Summing up, we find that we have dealt with a connecting region which may appropriately be considered as the classical case of its type in geography. A land which by its position was everyman's land, and which because of its geography was of greater interest to the foreigner than to its own inhabitants, being a part of three continents, was part of the life which grew on each. A nation formed on such a site belongs more to its neighbors than to itself. In this respect its future will resemble its past.